



PETER GUILDAY

March 25, 1884 - July 31, 1947

Founder of *The Catholic Historical Review*

Corresponding Member of the Academy of American
Franciscan History

As many readers of *The Americas* already know, Monsignor Peter Guilday, professor of American church history at The Catholic University of America, died in Washington, D. C., on July 31, 1947, at the age of sixty-three. His passing at the end of a long illness brought a distinguished career as a scholar and teacher to a close, and silenced the voice of a man who could speak, and did speak, with authority on the history of the Catholic Church in the United States.

Monsignor Guilday was clearly the outstanding American historian of his generation trained at the University of Louvain. His doctoral dissertation, the culmination of years of research, appeared in London in 1914 under the title of *The English Colleges and Convents in the Catholic Low Countries, 1558-1795*. He had hoped to investigate other aspects of the history of the Church in the British Isles, but the outbreak of the first World War put an end to his plans, and obliged him in October 1914 to return home.

He now accepted an instructorship in Church history at The Catholic University of America, and began at this time the association with our pontifical university which was to last until his death. With the active support of the rector, Thomas J. Shahan, he founded *The Catholic Historical Review* in 1915, and served as its principal editor until his retirement from the editorial board in 1941.

The entrance of the United States into the war in 1917 interfered with Monsignor Guilday's work as a teacher, but not with his extra-curricular historical activities. In 1919, believing that the time was ripe for

such an organization, he was largely responsible for the creation of the American Catholic Historical Association. The next few years saw the maturing of Peter Guilday as a scholar, and the publication of his major studies. His *Life and Times of John Carroll*, in two volumes, appeared in 1922. His *Life and Times of John England*, reputedly his best work, appeared five years later, also in two volumes.

The achievement of Monsignor Guilday as a scholar and as a leader of men was widely acclaimed in his lifetime. He received eight honorary degrees from as many Catholic colleges. In 1926 he was decorated by Belgium for his work in the restoration of the library of the University of Louvain. In 1935, as a fitting climax to his career, Pope Pius XI made him a domestic prelate with the title of right reverend monsignor.

In this brief account of Peter Guilday's life, it was not our purpose to add anything to what had already been done, and so competently, by Dr. John Tracy Ellis in his article in *The Catholic Historical Review*, XXXIII, No. 3 (October 1947), 257-268, upon which we have drawn heavily for the details of our own. We wish to record our sorrow at the death of a distinguished colleague, and to urge that the priest and scholar who passed through life so genially, and who found time, among his duties, to favor *The Americas* with his counsel, be remembered in prayer.

MANOEL CARDOZO

The Catholic University of America

